

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall 2026

Psychology 2115A Section 200

Introduction to Sensation and Perception

1 Calendar Description

An introduction to the study of the human senses and higher order perceptual processes. Data gathered from psychophysical research and studies of the nervous system in both humans and other animals will be discussed. The course will review the mechanisms and principles of operation of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell.

Antirequisites: Psychology 2015A/B

Prerequisites: A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level

2 On-campus lecture hours + 2 Online lecture hours per week; Course Weight: 0.5

Unless otherwise stated, students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to enrolling. Where prerequisites have not been met, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the course. In accordance with Western policy, this decision is not subject to appeal.

In the event of a discrepancy between this outline and Senate or University policies, the latter shall prevail. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of this course outline for pedagogical or operational reasons. Any such changes will be communicated to students in a timely manner.

2 Course Information

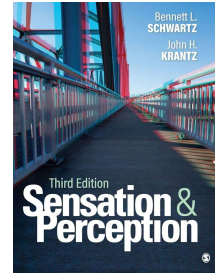
Instructor:	Dr. Blake Butler
Office:	WIRB 6126
Office Hours:	By appointment
Email:	bbutler9@uwo.ca – please use OWL for class communication

Teaching Assistant:	Rafaela Platkin
Office Hours:	By appointment
Email:	rplatkin@uwo.ca

Time and Location of Classes: This course operates via a blended model. Students will be expected to have reviewed recorded lecture content online before attending weekly in-person lectures that will take place Thursday mornings, 9:30-11:30am in 3M 3250. Assessments will be conducted during in-class lectures. **Note: this is not an online course – it is not possible to complete the course without being on campus.**

3 Course Materials

Sensation and Perception, 3rd Edition
BL Schwartz & JH Krantz
Sage Publishing



Print Version: [insert UWO bookstore link here]
eBook Version: [insert UWO bookstore link here]

Note: I have chosen the Schwartz & Krantz text for this course because I find it to be the most accessible yet comprehensive text available. Moreover, it is one of the most affordable options (believe it or not) and includes some good learning resources in the online accompaniment. Please note that we will cover this text **in its entirety** by the end of the course.

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The following table outlines the course learning outcomes and how they are assessed.

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
<i>Depth and Breadth of Knowledge.</i> - Students will learn about the structure and function of sensory systems, incorporating learning from across disciplines (anatomy, physiology, psychology) and will think critically about how perceptual processes are measured. - Students will use the knowledge acquired in the course to guide discovery-based learning aimed at developing a deeper understanding of sensory systems function.	Online & in-person course materials aligned with assigned readings from the text will provide the basic framework. A group project will allow students to learn about an illusory percept of their choice.	In-class quizzes and the final examination will be used to assess how students are retaining basic principles. Oral presentation and written document will be used to assess success.
<i>Application of Knowledge.</i> Students will apply their understanding of theory and measurement to novel challenges in sensation and perception.	Applications questions will ask students to apply learned concepts & theories to novel scenarios	The final exam will include a written portion that tests these applications explicitly.
<i>Communication Skills.</i> Students will learn to collaborate effectively with	A group project will ask students to work	An oral presentation and written document

their peers toward a common goal. Students will learn how to effectively communicate their ideas in a way that is accessible to their peers & content experts.	together to select, study, & present about a perceptual illusion.	will be used to assess the success of this group project.
Awareness of Limits of Knowledge. Students will consider instances of atypical and illusory perception to better appreciate the ambiguity and limits of our understanding of perception in the real world.	Atypical perception will be considered in order to better understand how different systems contribute to perceiving the world. The group assignment will ask students to examine a perceptual illusion to better understand how the brain constructs representations of external stimuli.	An oral presentation and written document will be used to assess the success of this group project.

5 Evaluation

Quizzes (20% each)

There will be two **in-class** quizzes throughout the term, each of which will contribute 20% toward your final grade. These will focus on the material presented since the previous test (i.e. Quiz 2 will focus on material presented after Quiz 1), including both lectures and associated readings.

Group Project (15%)

As a group, you will choose a perceptual phenomenon (a non-exhaustive list will be provided or you can come up with your own) and prepare a presentation and a written submission that contains:

- a description of the phenomenon;
- a description of what is interesting/puzzling about the phenomenon;
- a reasonable hypothesis that might explain the phenomenon; and
- a description of an experiment that could test the hypothesized explanation.

Groups will be assigned early in the term, and you will be responsible for scheduling to complete this project before the deadline. More details will be provided in class.

Final Exam (45%)

The final exam will be written in person in the Final Exam period. The exam will include material **from throughout the course** and will **include both lecture material and assigned**

readings. The exam will include multiple choice and written questions focused on applications (i.e., applying the concepts from the course to novel problems). More details will be provided before the end of term.

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives as listed in section 4 and are necessary for meeting these learning objectives. All evaluations listed in this course outline are required components of the course and together account for 100% of the final grade. Weightings and assessment formats may be adjusted where required to support course learning objectives, with appropriate notice to students.

Policy on Missing Coursework

Quizzes: Quizzes will take place during our regularly scheduled in-class meetings, and **no make-up quizzes will be made available**. Instead, the final exam will be reweighted to accommodate quizzes that are missed.

Group Project: Group presentations will be scheduled during our regularly scheduled in-class meetings. Any group who does not present on the scheduled date will be asked to record their presentation and submit via the OWL site. Recorded presentations and accompanying written submissions uploaded after the deadline will be penalized 10% per day to a maximum of 50%.

Final Exam: Students who are unable to write the final exam as scheduled should speak to their academic counsellor as soon as possible to discuss an accommodation. The date of the make-up final exam will be announced via the OWL shortly after the finalized exam schedule is posted.

Students who encounter extenuating circumstances affecting their academic responsibilities may submit a request for academic consideration in accordance with Western University's Academic Consideration policies. Requests must be submitted through the [Student Absence Portal](#) and may require supporting documentation.

Course grades within the Psychology Department are expected to be distributed around the following averages:

70%	1000-level to 2099-level courses
72%	2100-2999-level courses
75%	3000-level courses
80%	4000-level courses

In the event that course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to make adjustments to course grades. Such adjustment might include the normalization of one or more course components and/or the re-weighting of various course components.

Policy on Grade Rounding

Course grades are rounded to the nearest whole number. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade. Requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program will not be considered.

6 Assessment/Evaluation Schedule

Quiz 1 – Thursday October 22

Quiz 2 – Thursday November 12

Group Presentations/Written Document – Thursday November 26

Final Exam – TBD (to be held **in person** during the final exam period)

7 Class Schedule

Sept 10	Introduction	
Sept 14-18	What is Perception and how can we study it?	Chapters 1-2
Sept 21-25	Introduction to the Visual System	Chapter 3
Sept 28-Oct 2	The Visual Brain	Chapter 4
Oct 5-9	Form & Colour Perception	Chapters 5-6
Oct 12-16	READING WEEK	
Oct 19-23	Depth & Size Perception	Chapter 7
Oct 26-30	Visual Motion Perception	Chapter 8
Nov 2-6	Visual Attention	Chapter 9
Nov 9-13	Introduction to the Auditory System	Chapter 10
Nov 16-20	The Auditory Brain & Sound Localization	Chapter 11
Nov 23-27	Speech & Music Perception	Chapters 12-13
Nov 30-Dec 4	Somatosensation & Chemical Senses	Chapters 14-15

8 Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are treated seriously at Western University. Students are expected to understand and comply with the University's standards of academic integrity. Scholastic offences may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. Please read [Western's Scholastic Offences](#) policy for definitions and examples of Scholastic offences.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

In class assessments will be completed digitally. Please plan to bring your laptop/tablet to class on assessment days. No additional devices will be allowed. The final exam will be completed via pen and paper. No electronic devices will be allowed.

Plagiarism Detection Software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western and Turnitin.com.

Use of AI

Responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is **permitted** in this course as a support for learning, not as a substitute for critical thinking or scholarly work. All use of artificial intelligence tools must comply with Western University's academic integrity standards.

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) for:

- Brainstorming ideas or refining research questions
- Improving clarity, grammar, or organization
- Preliminary or background exploration of topics

AI must not be used to:

- Generate full drafts or final versions of assignments
- Replace analysis, interpretation, or synthesis
- Fabricate, misrepresent, or cite sources that the student has not independently consulted
- Bypass engagement with course materials

You are ultimately responsible for all work submitted under your name. AI output should be critically evaluated, substantially revised, and integrated thoughtfully, not copied verbatim.

All written assignments must include a brief AI Usage Statement, indicating:

- Which tools were used (if any)
- The purpose for which they were used
- How the output was modified and incorporated

Assignments submitted without an AI Usage Statement will not be accepted. Misuse of AI or failure to disclose its use may constitute a scholastic offence and will be addressed in accordance with Western University's academic integrity policies. Students are responsible for ensuring that all work complies with Western's scholastic integrity standards.

Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

9 Academic Accommodations and Accessible Education

Western University is committed to providing an accessible learning environment. Students with disabilities or medical conditions requiring accommodation are encouraged to contact Accessible Education as early as possible. Accommodations will be implemented in accordance with University policy. Please review [Western's policy on academic accommodations](#) for student with disabilities. Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western. If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation that will be recognized in all your courses, visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information. Email: aew@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10 Absence & Academic Consideration

Please review Western's policy on [Academic Considerations](#):

11 Other Information

Helpful Websites

- Western's academic policies are available at the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- Departmental policies are available at the [Psychology Department website](#).
- Learning supports available at [Learning Development & Success](#).

Well-being

Western University provides a range of supports to promote student well-being. Students are encouraged to seek assistance when needed. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness at Western](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the [policy documentation](#) on requests for relief. Please first contact the course instructor. If your issue is not resolved, you may make your appeal in writing to the Undergraduate Chair in Psychology (psyugrd@uwo.ca).

Copyright Statement

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